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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/771,329	01/26/2001	Theresa M. Welbourne	4849-000001	6747

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EXAMINER

DENNISON, JERRY B

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2143

DATE MAILED: 08/26/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/771,329

Applicant(s)

WELBOURNE, THERESA M.

Examiner

J. Bret Dennison

Art Unit

2143

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 January 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-33 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 26 January 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 26 January 2001.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. This Action is in response to Application Number 09/771329 received on 26 January 2001.
2. Claims 1-33 are presented for examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by D'Alessandro (U.S. Patent Number 6,556,974).

3. Regarding claim 1, D'Alessandro discloses a method of predicting and influencing the performance of an organization comprising the steps of:

initiating a survey with an independent third party (D'Alessandro, col. 5, lines 44-53, D'Alessandro teaches initiating a survey to workers);

sending a first correspondence from the independent third party to a member of the organization (D'Alessandro, col. 5, line 50 through col. 6, line 30, D'Alessandro teaches initiating a survey to workers);

providing an independent third party web site (D'Alessandro, col. 5, lines 44-55);

asking the member of the organization at least one question related to the

individuals energy level at the web site D'Alessandro, col. 5, line 50 through col. 6, line 30, D'Alessandro teaches an administrator of the system giving a survey asking questions related to the employee, for example, performance);

accessing the independent third party's web site by the member of the organization and responding thereto (D'Alessandro, col. 5, line 50 through col. 6, line 30);

sending the member's comments and responses to a database (D'Alessandro, col. 5, line 60-67, D'Alessandro teaches a database collecting survey results); and

analyzing the comments by the independent third party (D'Alessandro, col. 9, line 5-65, D'Alessandro teaches analyzing the survey data).

4. Regarding claim 2, D'Alessandro teaches the limitations, substantially as claimed, as described in claim 1, including the step of the independent third party providing advice to the organization on how to respond to the member's comments (D'Alessandro, col. 9, lines 54-60).

5. Regarding claim 3, D'Alessandro teaches the limitations, substantially as claimed, as described in claim 1, including preparing a report from the comments (D'Alessandro, col. 9, lines 35-40);

sending the report to the web site (D'Alessandro, col. 9, lines 40-50, D'Alessandro teaches the report is constructed in a database, located at the website server;

notifying the organization that a report is available (D'Alessandro, col. 9, lines 30-35, D'Alessandro teaches that the system notifies management of the report);

retrieving the report by the organization at the independent third party's web site (D'Alessandro, col. 9, lines 40-50); and

sending a second correspondence from the independent third party to the member of the organization (D'Alessandro, col. 9, lines 40-50).

6. Regarding claim 4, D'Alessandro teaches the limitations, substantially as claimed, as described in claim 3, including wherein sending a report includes the step of calculating changes in a member's pulse (D'Alessandro, col. 5, lines 44-46, D'Alessandro teaches obtaining information from individual employees regarding their perception of performance criteria existing in the workplace, lines 60-67, D'Alessandro also teaches comparing with prior survey data, therefore changes in pulse are calculated for each member).

7. Regarding claim 5, D'Alessandro teaches the limitations, substantially as claimed, as described in claim 3, including wherein sending a report includes the step of

8. determining whether a significant change has occurred to the pulse of the organization (D'Alessandro, col. 5, lines 60-67, D'Alessandro teaches comparing with prior survey data, col. 9, lines 5-30, D'Alessandro also teaches weighted scores).

9. Regarding claim 6, D'Alessandro teaches the limitations, substantially as claimed, as described in claim 3, including wherein sending a report includes the step of determining whether a significant change has occurred in the pulse of the member (col. 9, lines 5-20, D'Alessandro teaches a weighted score component so that data can be accurately tallied with sophisticated analysis and report generation).

10. Regarding claim 7, D'Alessandro teaches the limitations, substantially as claimed, as described in claim 3, including wherein sending a report includes the step of providing a set of best possible responses to the member's comments (D'Alessandro, col. 9, lines 54-60).

11. Regarding claim 8, D'Alessandro teaches the limitations, substantially as claimed, as described in claim 3, including wherein sending a report includes the step of editing responses to remove a member's identity (D'Alessandro, col. 4, lines 20-30, D'Alessandro teaches that employees are provided with the opportunity to submit candid answers to potentially sensitive questions, inherently meaning that their identity is removed).

12. Regarding claim 9, D'Alessandro teaches the limitations, substantially as claimed, as described in claim 3, including wherein sending a report includes the step of categorizing comments (D'Alessandro, col. 9, lines 39-55).

13. Regarding claim 10, D'Alessandro teaches the limitations, substantially as claimed, as described in claim 9, including wherein categorizing comments includes using an expert system (D'Alessandro, col. 9, lines 39-55).

14. Regarding claim 12, D'Alessandro teaches the limitations, substantially as claimed, as described in claim 1, including the step of the independent third party contacting the member of the organization to let them know a response has been provided (D'Alessandro, col. 9, lines 50-60).

15. Regarding claim 13, D'Alessandro teaches the limitations, substantially as claimed, as described in claim 1, including the step of providing a computer system having a member interface, an organization interface, and an independent third party interface (D'Alessandro, col. 6, lines 25-67, D'Alessandro, col. 6, lines 25-67 teaches a member interface, col. 9, lines 50-60, D'Alessandro teaches an organization interface by providing the results, col. 3, lines 60-67, D'Alessandro teaches a third party interface wherein the survey administrator can analyze survey results).

Claim1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Friedman (U.S. Patent Number 6,591,256).

16. Regarding claim 1, Friedman discloses a method of predicting and influencing the performance of an organization comprising the steps of:

initiating a survey with an independent third party (Friedman, col. 1, lines 53-56, Friedman teaches users being prompted for input);

sending a first correspondence from the independent third party to a member of the organization (Friedman, col. 1, lines 40-45, Friedman teaches a web page presented to the user of a business group);

providing an independent third party web site (Friedman, col. 1, lines 40-45, Friedman teaches a web page presented to the user of a business group);

asking the member of the organization at least one question related to the individuals energy level at the web site (Friedman, col. 2, lines 60-67, Friedman teaches the web page asking for input related to business problems or categories of problems);

accessing the independent third party's web site by the member of the organization and responding thereto (Friedman, col. 3, lines 5-20, Friedman teaches the user accessing the web site to solve the user's business problem);

sending the member's comments and responses to a database (Fig. 1, 40, Friedman teaches the use of a database to solve problems); and

analyzing the comments by the independent third party (Friedman, col. 3, lines 1-25, Friedman teaches the business problems being mapped to one or more mathematical problems).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over D'Alessandro in view of obviousness.

17. Regarding claim 11, D'Alessandro teaches the limitations, substantially as claimed, as described in claim 3. D'Alessandro does not explicitly state the second party providing a response to the member of the organization by forwarding it through the independent third party. However, it would have been obvious to one in the ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention for the second party to provide a response to the member of the organization through their account with the third party (D'Alessandro, col. 6, lines 25-67) because providing a response is the same behavior as providing a survey through the third party.

18. Claims 14-33 contain a method and system with the same limitations as those of claims 1-13. Therefore claims 14-33 are rejected by the same art used in claims 1-13.

Conclusion

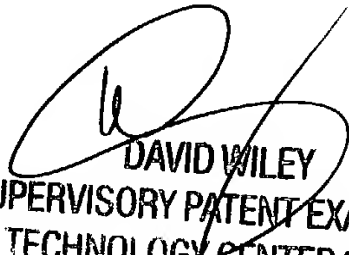
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to J. Bret Dennison whose telephone number is (703)305-8756. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30am-5pm.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David A Wiley can be reached on (703)308-5221. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

J. Bret Dennison
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 2143


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